THE MOODS OF LIFE

POEMS OF VARIED FEELING

WILLIAM FRANCIS BARNARD

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POEMS OF VARIED FEELING

BY

WILLIAM FRANCIS BARNARD

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THE POET'S WORK

AS the Bee hies to the flowers,
Gathering nectar through the hours,
So the Poet, taking wings,
Seeks the blooms of Time, and clings
Till he can their essence reach
And distill it into Speech.

Ranging through the ways of Life,
He gathers of the Peace, the Strife,
The Laughs, the Groans, the Joys, the Tears;
Dark flowers or beauteous of the years;—
Their sweet juice with their bitter juice
Transmuting for his wondrous use.

Ah, the Honey of his Song!
He shall labor, lingering long,
Ever storing it in words
Which mock the fluted tones of birds,
Against the time when Men will look
And find it Hived within a Book.

THE BETTER WAY

OR if at this life's end Time will recall
The gift of days allotted unto me,
Or whether in a far futurity
I shall be and rejoice, I question not at all.
I cannot know, nor may I fate forestall;
Wherefore should I inquire, then, curiously?
Rather the rapture of Joy's song shall be:
'Tis sweet to live, I feel, what'er befall.

Life's gladdening season mine; then if death rise
And say, "Thy deeds are done and counted o'er,"
I will make pause with calmly closèd eyes,
To lie where Shakespeare, all men, lay before;
Crowned with the Springtime's splendid auguries
And golden glory that the Autumn wore.

JUNE

WHEN Spring has kissed her hand
To the sweet and glowing band
Of flowers that deck the land,
For a boon,
And goes down the sunset way
In the final hour of May,
Singing low a parting lay,
It is June.

When trees take deeper green,
When lusher grass is seen,
And youngling shrubs between
Thick are strewn;
When the softer South Wind blows,
And a warmer sunlight glows
On every garden close,
It is June.

JUNE

When the Sky is brightly blue,
When glad birds go two by two,
And turn to love and sue
For a tune;
When the air is sweet with scent
By the honeysuckle lent,
By the rose and lily spent,
It is June.

When the sudden silver rain
Falls, and sudden falls again,
Like a rapture that has lain
In a swoon;
When the River slowly glides
With its fresh and reedy sides
Softly shadowed in the tides,
It is June.

When the nectar 'gins to flow,
When the Bees fly to and fro,
Honey hunting as they go
With their rune;
When the blithe Grasshopper's voice,
Where he garners to his choice,
Newly bids the world rejoice,
It is June.

JUNE

When the scolding bills so deft
Weave the nest within the cleft;
When the Butterfly has left
The cocoon,
And like a living flower,
Seeks the queen flower of the bower
To kiss her for an hour,
It is June.

When the waters with the sky
Seem in fellowship to lie;
When the winds and trees will sigh
And commune;
When stress and strife are done,
When the earth drinks in the sun,
And all life lives as one,
It is June.

When the moments would be days;
When they linger in their ways
Full of beauty and of praise,
After noon,
Till the evening shadows creep,
And the Land will fall asleep
In a slumber soft and deep,
It is June.

JUNE

When Dawn has heard from Night,
Of her tremulous delight
As she dwells upon the sight
'Neath the moon;
When Night from Dawn has heard
In a softest spoken word
How his soul with joy is stirred,
It is June.

When the Heart forgets its care;
When a wonder thrills the air,
With all grown sweet and fair
Strangely soon;
When Life moves in glad amaze
Through the leafy, blooming ways,
Too full of joy for praise,
It is June.

A CONFESSION

THE song my heart would sing
Is like the murmuring
Of peaceful streams when soft they glide away
To far-off seas which call them, journeying;
But sometimes may it ring
Like waters when they fling
O'er sands and shoals and rocks that stem and stay;
A song of battle and of triumphing.

The life that I would know
Is one which free could go;
A calm, untroubled life, that finds its ends,
And moves through all its ways nor fast nor slow;
But sometimes life should grow
Tumultuous: I must throw
Myself on that which hampers me and bends,
To see it crash in ruin and lie low.

IN THE BATTLE

I

A SONG for the heart is the song that must start from the lips of the wide, free Sea,
As against the shore it flings with a roar, glad in the strife to be.
From near and far where its sources are, it gathers a million times,
Its waves in throng singing one loud song with wild recurrent rhymes;
A song whose sound is of life unbound; of infinite strength and mirth;
Of one whose goal is from pole to pole, and on, to the ends of the earth.
There, issuing forth from the south and the north, it floods to the land in the west,
To fall from a height with a crushing might on the barriers' stony breast.
Though the iron rock makes light of the shock, and unmoved meets the tide,
Still it comes and goes, with the song it knows, and its strength, while the years abide.

It strives, though it fails. It weds with the
gales, and tosses its scornful foam,
With a tireless will, as a challenge still, o'er
the highest headland's dome.

II

Whose soul is strong, his lips have a song
of life that goes unchained;
In sign of a hand which heeds not command,
and will not be restrained.
In sign of a heart that knows its part, and
yields not; day by day,
Through foul and through fair, through joy and
care keeping its chosen way.
Fronting all eyes, that soul denies the strength
of man's bonds and bars;
Appealing from these to the wide free seas
under the shining stars.
Whoso is a man; who will and can; who dares
to live his life,
From the first to the last his way is cast in the
troubled fields of strife.
But he never retreats, nor knows defeats; liv-
ing, he faces his foes,
And with all who essay to bar his way, he con-
tends till he overthrows.
He strives to the last. He stands there fast,
and into the teeth of the world

His scorn to yield on the strenuous field in
eternal challenge is hurled.

III

Who would be free, he lives as the sea; and led
by the light of truth,
In freedom's name he smites each shame, with
never a thought of ruth.
Sturdy of hand, he takes his stand on life's wide
battle-ground,
One of the brave, whom none shall enslave and
who never a brother have bound.
Hoping no meed but each fruitful deed, he
parries the blows of the wrong;
Joy in his eyes, while his spirit cries through
his lips in a triumph song.
Though e'en he doth lose, he could not choose
to turn from the arduous fray:
He finds delight in the glorious fight and the
song, till his hair grows gray.
By dark and by dawn his blade is drawn; he
fears not, neither quails;
To strive to be free is victory: he conquers
though he fails.
Defiant there with his forehead bare, he an-
swers blow with blow;
A Warrior leal; with unbroken steel, and fear-
less face to the foe.

THE CHALLENGE OF LIBERTY

NOW, Man, Arouse! Awake!
Put the sleep from off thine eyes;
At last the Dark of Ages dies.
A flush mounts in the eastern skies;
The Morn begins to break.
Hear thou! Arise! Arise!

That mad dream of thy Kind—
The dream that life must feed on fear;
That man to man may draw not near;
That Thou art born to hatred here—
Nay, put it out of mind.
Be thou of better cheer!

Let thy doubts be done.
Master and Slave shall be no more!
Around the Earth, from shore to shore,
Cry, "Comrades, come! Time's night is o'er!"
Then turn and greet the Sun,
With Glory all before!

THE AWAKENING

OH, joy of the Spring!
The blue sky, the white cloud,
The bird on the wing,
And the brook singing loud;
The sweet smell of earth,
Soft winds calling rain,
Buds bursting to birth,
And life living again!

Forth, forth, where thou art,
To the hills and the streams!
Thy winter too, Heart,
Be gone with dark dreams!
If thou stand in the sun,
Or hear thunder's brave voice,
Thy doubting is done;
Thou wilt weep, and rejoice!

TO THE ENEMIES OF FREE SPEECH.

AS well to lay your hands upon the Sun
And try with bonds to bind the morning light,
As well on the Four Winds to spend your might,
As well to strive against the Streams that run;
As well to bar the Seasons, bid be done
The Rain which falls; as well to blindly fight
Against the Air, and at your folly's height
Aspire to make all power that is be none.

As well to do all this as to impeach
Man's tongue, and bid it answer to the schools;
As well to do all this, as give us rules,
And bid us hold our words within your reach;
As well all this, as try to chain man's speech.
So others learned before ye lived, O fools!

COMRADES

OVER the parting oceans,
O'er the dividing lands,
We call to you, our Brothers;
We stretch to you comrade Hands.

Enough of the wars of Empire;
Enough of the lusts of Trade.
Eye unto eye, our Fellows,
And let a New Pact be made!

The lore of the Ages tells it:
All Wisdom's voices call,—
"Humans, Ye stand, together;
And, each against each, Ye fall!"

COMRADES

Enough of the bounds and borders;
  Nay, no life lives alone.
Hear, men of the farthest nation:—
  We are made of one Flesh and Bone.

Away with the Fear that parts us;
  Away with our threatening might;
Shout Good Speed to us, calling.
  Men of all Earth, Unite!

Hope be with us forever,
  And Strength, as the Sun above.
The power of our hands be Courage,
  The pulse of our hearts be Love.

ON THE WINGS OF A BIRD

A SUDDEN Bird sped rapt and singing
swiftly toward the Blue,
From Woodlands dark and dim,
Whose somber borders I was slowly, sadly
wandering through,
And my heart followed Him.

Startled from doleful dreams and sick, a sense
of doomed dismay,
With eyes upon his flight,
I reached him soaring surely in the glowing
dome of day
Far toward the realms of light.

All strong, as though upon some glorious, gra-
cious errand bound,
He blithely winged the air;
My feet were leaden weights, and firm and
fixed upon the ground,
Yet I went with him there,

And joined him in his music mad; a melody in
praise
Of Freedom, Love, and Life;
A song of rapturous effort and of long-drawn
gladsome days
Where worthiest deeds are rife.

It seemed we sought fair Regions far upbuilded
in the Vast,
Which here no eyes may see;
Where blest accomplished wonders wait, and
Joy has strength to last,
And tears may never be.

Forgetful for one instant perfect in new-born
desire,
Of pain, of woe, of death,
Beyond all reach of thought marked with the
sear of sorrow's fire,
In hope I drew my breath.

The Soul within me thrilled with aspirations
new begun,
Power came to heart and mind,
Winging my way at that vast height which I
had scaled and won,
With memory left behind.

On, on we flew far toward the distant, placid,
purple peaks
And eastern springs of Dawn;
And where some clouds lay soft, and rose and
stretched in snowy streaks,
We vanished, and were gone.

PIONEERS

TOO full of freedom's passion to endure
The heavy bonds of custom, age on age,
Men rise up, having strength and courage sure,
And would in time's adventurous tasks engage.

Alien in settled lands, Earth's titans these,
Whose mighty strength must find fit deeds afar;
In curious search they sail o'er all her seas,
Asking no guides save sun, or moon, or star.

And where they pause, enamored, for a time,
They hear their hearts within, that long to go;
Which will not let them rest in any clime
As long as worlds lie wide, and far streams flow.

PIONEERS

They toil up mountains, pierce great pathless
woods,
They cross the deserts waste, then hasten on.
Taming the Earth for following multitudes,
They face the beckoning sunset, and are
gone.

IN PORTENT

WHAT joy for two well met,
That first sweet, vague, wild longing in the breast;
A yearning strange, which will not be expressed;
The heart unyielded yet.

Love's harbingers awing;
Like rose scents blown from gardens far away,
Which tell, as only wind-borne odors may,
Of buds, and blossoming.

IN LOVE'S DEPTHS

WE were young pilgrims in the land of love,
My King and I. We had tasted love's first kiss.
Alone, close-clasped, we had dreamed wild dreams of bliss
Where moon and stars smiled on us from above.
Then, one calm night, most like a mating dove,
I sought my King; when, wandering, I wis,
We smelled sweet flowers, and were as lost; —but this
I may not tell: my heart would cease to move!

Hidden beyond the farthest reach of words
There is delight, for love kept sacredly;
And we were crowned with this. Now I could die
Nor feel regret; or, like the morning birds,
Sing what forever unexpressed must be;
And soar like them, to vanish in the sky.

JUSTIFICATION

I

SHE has uttered her heart to them all: The warm maiden moon,
The stars gleaming soft in the zenith when night is at noon,
The clear dawning flame, and the sunset-sky rivers that show
Rare gold and red beauty and purple in following flow,
Cool depths of dim woods, and crystal-voiced, hesitant streams,
Blown clouds in the sky that wander like dreamers of dreams,
Wide emerald fields made glorious with blossoms of flowers,
The hills in the dim purple distance, the soft winds and showers—
All have heard her love's story. By day, and deep in the night,
She has breathed to the world her heart's hope, her desire, her delight.

II

Return for her love she has, too; and she joys
to possess
The gift of a heart, and its kisses, and every
caress.
The union of all within all of life's service and
meeds;
The whole of love's uttermost gifts and un-
speakable deeds
Are hers; in life's springtime, untainted, un-
shadowed,—the whole
That a soul full of love and of truth can confer
on a soul.
It is rapture; a joy unconfined; and that needs
must be sung;
A glory of dreams and delight in a heart that is
young.
Her's was love that but asked what it gave, that
the life lamp might burn,—
An equal abandon of life unto love in return.

III

She has uttered herself to the earth and all
pure things that live;
She has spoken her soul, and besought these
responses to give.
The sunlight has blessed her; the moonbeams
have kissed her white brow;
The trees sigh assent to her message; the wild
blossoms bow;
In the vales, on the hilltops, all voices are glad-
ness in throng;
And her purpose is sealed by the sound of
sweet birds in their song.
Naught has she invoked but has heard her,
and answered her so,
With a voice or an aspect most fair; and she
surely may know
That what seems to her best of all best things
a glad soul may tell,
Is at one with all beauty that lives; and she
says, "It is well!"

IV

So she yields for a gift all she is, to him finding
her fair.
A splendor of longing and courage, her spirit
stands bare,
And confesses itself; clear discerning the while
it is fed,
All shapes of all sorrow as nothing, thrust from
it and fled;
While the fervors of passion grow strong, and
consume as with flame
Dim, darkening doubts and the shadowy sub-
stance of shame.
All sounds she deems music; all bitterness
changes to sweet;
All souls seem as one, and all pathways grow
smooth to her feet.
Good fills the whole world; around her, be-
neath, and above.
Life melts into joy, and the substance of joy
into love.

MAN AND WOMAN

STAR set to star in amber duskèd sky,
Or ere all evening's white orbs pierce the blue,
Alone upon a cloud-verge, plain to view
In double glory;—oftentimes have I
Gazed on two shimmering stars, and with a sigh,
The while tumultuous feelings thrilled me through,
Thought long of man and woman as those two,
And how the expanse of life they glorify.

For man and woman are as stars: how fair
In merging beauty; soul matched with rich soul!
Though moving onward far to separate ends,
With majesty, as close their orbits bear,
The heart in man, the heart in woman bends;
And two seem one awhile, and for one goal.

THE DEAD LOVE

TWO stood where Love was lying cold,
And bowing, wept sad mutual tears;
And delved his grave within the mould,
Low murmuring to each other's ears.
Sweet Love had sickened day by day,
Till all but life's last breath was fled;
Sudden, beside their common way
The fair Youth sank down dead.

In journeys with them through the hours
He of his riches aye would spend
Fair gold of joy and rapture's flowers;
But now they stood as friend with friend.
And far and strange looked all the past,
As they had known, yet had not known;
And toward the future there lay cast
Their shadowy ways, alone.

THE DEAD LOVE

They thought of Love as first he came,
  And how life seemed made for delight.
Too arduous had he been for shame
  Through the long daytime and through night.
They spake of all their hands had wrought
  To keep Love's life both fresh and fair;
And how to save him they had sought
  In vigils of sweet care.

Their kisses seemed most piteous things
  The while they strove again to kiss.
Their fervors all had taken wings,
  Or fallen in some dream's abyss.
Their hands were cold that touched and clung;
  Their eyes grew dull to what they saw;
Their lips, that had all rosy sung,
  Were white with strangest awe.

Yes, so it was:—their love had passed;
  For nothing lives that will not die;
But sudden came the end at last,
  When neither deemed it could be nigh.

They doubted doubt; they slackly stood,
  Amazed that doom had fallen so.
They heard the beating of their blood,
  And wondered at its flow.

He said, "I feared this love would live
  And die, as all things on the earth;
But what has time of gifts to give
  Of greater,—nay, of equal worth?"
She only answered, "Near and far,
  Thus other souls have felt before.
The sweetest things most mortal are,
  And shall be, evermore."

They buried Love midst scented bloom,
  And scattered boughs of cypress green;
Then sealed the doorway of his tomb,
  That he might nevermore be seen.
They paused at last, and said, "'Tis well!"
  Then turned apart, as it should be;
But while they went, as still to tell,
  They wept for memory.

LOVE'S WAY

LOVE wears no chains or fetters save its own,—
The golden bonds of homage and desire.
The steel-linked gyves of duty, cold and dire,
It breaks in twain, and rule is overthrown.
Not in the will, but in the heart alone,
Love has its life; and if at last it tire,
'Tis fruitless work to blame its failing fire,
Or try with force to teach it to atone.

If Love would stay, not all the woeful stings
Of direst fate could tempt it to retreat;
If Love would go, not all the wealth of kings
In heapèd gold could make its serfdom sweet.
Freely it comes; and bind thou not its wings,
Or lifeless Love will lie beneath thy feet.

FUTURE AND PAST

O MIGHTY Age and waking dawn divine!
Thou golden meed for the World in times to come;
Bringing with thee the Fellowship of Man
Sooner or later ere the Earth grows grey;
The silent centuries of fruitful years
Shall cast their gathered glory into thee
As wondrous gain. Humanity's long hope,
Its courage, dreams, its blind beginnings; all
Its striving toward the light it could not see;
Its mad adventuring in mistaken ways;
Its wild pathetic efforts at its bonds;
Its doubts, its smiles, its all-unmeasured tears;
Its labor, pain, its faith, its love—even these,
By which it proves its birthright, coming so,
To lay its gifts within thy outstretched palms,
Shall make a dower too rich for Time's old hands,
But fit for thee. And thou shalt not be still.

Thou, then thyself clear-showing to all eyes,
Shall as in thanks make utterance of how
The Past, in pain and suffering, served the day
When thou should'st rise, enamored aye of thee,
As yet unseen. There shalt thou say with voice
Heard of all ears, "The Past is all I am.
O ye who praise, hymn not the present day.
It bears a borrowed glory. Now ye give
Fair gifts of song; and temples dedicate
To festival, fill with your countless throngs;
And raise great marble arches to my fame,
Where all my deeds are blazoned to the skies,
In golden words. Hymn rather, now, the years,
The dim, the dark, the dreary years, that gained
This good, this true, this beautiful, and brought
And gave it here, to make me what I am;
Who else were nothing. Lo, Time's tasks are great!
And while ye reap new fields, and drink new wine,
And take sweet ease, and see tomorrow come
Without a fear, and all that is seems well,
Forget not those, your brothers, whose rough lives,
In Earth's far centuries lived, found with such pain
The paths whereon your feet accustomed go,

Like any child's which know the road home
well.
Forget not to give love and tears to those,
Born unto strife with Nature and with Man,
Who through blind struggle found the way to
peace;
All going down to death that ye might live,
And love!"

THE GODS

THE Gods are dead!
Dead lies their Heaven, their
Hell.
The Gods are dead,
With all their terrors! Well.
Man now unmakes them,
Who made them in his youth;
He boldly breaks them
With shattering blows of Truth!

Well that each Idol
Has fallen where it lies.
Man is Man's highest,
With grandeur in his eyes!
But hear, ye Humans!
Give Man no crowns or rods:
Men are your fellows;
Nay, raise not up new Gods!

EPIGRAM

EPIGRAM

TO AN ASCETIC READER OF VENUS AND ADONIS

IS this wine o'erstrong for You?
Yet condemn not, Nose of Blue.
Mayhap 'twere wisdom far more fine
To judge your Poor Self by the Wine.

IN THE JOY OF LIFE

WHEN the first faint sun of spring
Brings the blackbird on the wing;
When the mould turned by the plow
Has a sweetest scent somehow;
When the distant hills show clear
Through the cool, clean atmosphere;
When the young buds on the tree
Ope and peer forth cautiously;
Then it is good to live,
For life has much to give.

When the birds are in full song,
Praising summer glad and long;
When the wide fields wave with green;
When the wooded hills are seen
Shining through the rainbow shower;
When the roadside is aflower
As the gardens; and their musk
The roses spend from dawn to dusk;
Then it is good to be,
For life has much for me.

IN THE JOY OF LIFE

When the birds sound glad farewells
And fly away where summer dwells;
When the barns are heaped to hold
The reapers' wealth in grain of gold;
When wooded hills and hollows wave
Autumn's flaming banners brave;
When the fruit is filled with juice,
And all things, ripened, wait their use;
Then it is good to live,
For life has much to give.

When the hardy snowbirds go
Wing to wing across the snow;
When the fields are buried deep,
Resting in their winter sleep;
When the icy winds rejoice
Through the woods with shrillest voice;
When a flaming fire invites;
When a thumb-worn book delights;
Then it is good to be,
For life has much for me.

CHILDHOOD'S SORROW

LITTLE Goldenhair was weeping;
Like stormy skies
Her brow and eyes.
Sorrow held her heart in keeping;
And tears of pain
Fell fast like rain.

Like some brief thunderstorm that dashes
On summer noon;—
For I saw, soon,
Eyes like sunshine through wet lashes,
And sweet the while,
A rainbow smile.

AT TWILIGHT

OH, splendid presence of the evening Sky,
With bronze and violet shadows in the west,
And one white star, like an enraptured guest,
Down looking in a trembling ecstacy!
At dusk, what hour I watched the daylight die,
Nature seemed only fair, benign, and blest;
I could have laid my head upon her breast
In perfect trust, who oft makes man to sigh.

For all her rage our tears! But with her flowers,
Or where sweet shadows mantle on green grass,
Or where her silver-winding rivers pass
Beneath her moon; or in her twilight hours,
We love, remembering not her darker powers,
Forgetting ever that we have said "Alas."

YOUTH AND AGE

THE morning hath its sun;
But dusk, when day is done,
Hath stars that one by one
Come forth and glow.
If of a feebler might,
And shedding lesser light,
They lead the feet aright
Of who must go.

Youth hath its faith and power,
With all its life in flower,
And fruitful deeds for dower,
And joy and zest;
But Age, when time hath waned,
With much once loved, disdained,
Hath that true good attained,—
A heart at rest.

YOUTH AND AGE

Youth labors in life's field
To gain the harvest's yield;
And mighty arms doth wield
  In mighty tasks;
Age looks not on before,
Nor counts its efforts o'er;
Grown calm, to strive no more
  Is all it asks.

Youth hath its splendid hope;
With the round world for scope;
Nor fears, nor doubts may cope
  With this, or shake;
But Age, white, worn, and spent,
Rests silent and content
In sweet peace permanent,
  Which naught will break.

As water unto wine,
Is Age, to Youth divine:
Glad Youth, with passions fine
  And glorious rage.
As fevers to soft dreams;
As flames to candle-gleams;
As torrents to still streams,
  Is Youth, to Age.

FROM DARK TILL DAWN

MEETING

A SCIMITAR moon in a violet dusk;
A sleepy midnight wind;
A hidden seat mid the roses musk;
A rose in the path behind.

A white hand pushing the bloom apart;
A voice: "Now I hold thee fast!"
A heart that longed for the home of the heart
Is home in its home at last.

TOGETHER

Silence, except the sound of sighs;
The hushèd tones of love;
While eyes in the gloom seek other eyes,
And the poplars tremble above.

Breast against breast in throbbing beat;
  Bewildering passion's spell.
Raptures sweet with a pain that is sweet;—
  And the hours are struck on the bell.

PARTING

A straining clasp in the dawn's half light,
  While the oriole wakes in its nest;
A clasp, and a kiss on a throat more white
  Than the white rose at its best;

The dew pearls drop from the shaken stalks;
  The moon sinks over the hill.
A tiptoe step on the echoing walks,
  And joy in the heart lies still.

MEMORY

MARK thou this One with long look backward cast,
Over her shoulder ever gazing; and
The magic mirror held within her hand,
Which still before thy wondering eye is passed.
Dost know the shapes which draw from out the vast
To swim within those depths at her command,
The shadows of spent hours on seat or land,
From life's first dreamful day unto this last?

Her name is Memory. Anon she shows
What sweetens still some far, sweet hour for thee;
Anon she brings old Sorrow to thy woes;
Anon, as though her task were mockery,
She makes thee look on Joy amidst thy throes;
Or, in delight, on some old Agony.

MARTYRDOM

TO UTTER your thoughts before all men;
Speaking full freely with voice and pen;
True to the truth, while it brings to you
But cold contempt or a harsh taboo—
Or to lock your lips, all truth resigned,
While you make a grave of the fruitful mind;
And fawn on the knee with the fawning crowd,
The shallow-souled and the narrow-browed;
The price of your silence a slave's ease;—
come;
Which is the greater martyrdom?

To act as you think; untrammeled and bold;
To do and to give, or refuse and withhold;
Enduring scorn, or things more fell;
The mob perhaps, or a prison cell—
Or to chain your hands to your chainèd lips,
And crouch, your manhood in eclipse;

MARTYRDOM

For the whip of a custom to come or go;
To the idols of force your head bowed low;
Your payment a coward's existence;—come;
Which is the greater martyrdom?

To live your life though the whole world
blame;
Taking no thought of fame or shame;
Fighting; and falling if you must;
Your face to the foe as you sink in the dust—
Or to sell your heart and your soul for peace,
And get for your gain a longer lease
Of a life which at most can be but a lie;
Bound in shame till it rot and die;
All of its potencies palsied;—come;
Which is the greater martyrdom?

A BALLADE OF BUTTERFLIES

WHILE blue is all the sky;
While winds waft to and fro;
While clover scents slip by,
And birds sing loud or low—
What sprites are these, that show
Their flashing banners bare,
And fraught with magic, go?
Butterflies in air.

While summer's flowers are nigh,
And time for joy moves slow;
While trees with pleasure sigh,
And streams like jewels flow—
What sprites are these, that show,
Far-glittering and so fair,
A gleam and then a glow?
Butterflies in air.

A BALLADE OF BUTTERFLIES

While myriad beauties vie
  With all the worth they know
While changing clouds on high
  Float like fair fields of snow—
  What sprites are these that show
The glory that they wear
  As sparks from heaven's bow?
Butterflies in air.

ENVOY

Swift-winging high and low,
What sprites are these that show
Red, blue, and golden there?
Butterflies in air.

CHOOSING

THE East is Wisdom. Ancient, calm, she stands
With truth held in her contemplative hands!
The North is strong Endurance. See, she waits,
Arms folded there, and fronting adverse fates!
Pleasure is all the spirit of the South;
Shown in her eyes and on her amorous mouth.
But give me for my mistress, Her, the West;
That young, glad, striving spirit takes me best!

FATHER DAMIEN

SAINT, martyr; thou whom Dante would have set
Beneath the smile of God in Paradise;
Within whose spirit in their noblest guise
All tenderness and fortitude were met;
With thine own Church, which shrines thee in regret,
One who knows naught of Heaven within the skies,
Or of thy God, still keeps thee in his eyes,
And in his heart, and never will forget.

Whether God be or not, Thou, thou hast been,
And sought'st the Leper's isle to sooth and bless.
Whether thou smilest in Heaven o'er thy woe,
Or liest in dust, I ask not; I have seen
In thy great deeds of human faithfulness
To what far heights of glory Man may go.

ROUNDEL

THE LAST GOOD-BY

GOOD-BY, my Life. Dusk-hooded Death
Waits near the bedside where I lie,
And bids me breathe with my last breath,
"Good-by!"

I know not what it is to die;
But Death speaks softly, and he saith,
"Peace, first!" Content to trust am I.

I go to learn; and like rich meth,
Drunk from a cup to satisfy,
The thought. Doors, ope! One challengeth!
Good-by!

THE ROISTERING KNIGHTS

WE'VE won the castle, Knights At Arms;
They who were here have fled;
And Fate, that keepeth us from harms,
Hath made it ours instead.
But hie not to tell Court and King,
Who dream our battle's clang;
Let us rejoice and feast and sing,
And King and Court may hang;
May hang;
And King and Court may hang!

Now bring wine flagons to the board,
And serve good meat around.
Each weary knight unbelt his sword
And cast it on the ground.
You, young Esquire, roar out a song;
And let the sweet lute twang;
We'll rest ourselves, or right or wrong;
And King and Court may hang;
May hang;
And King and Court may hang!

Much have we done for Court and King;
  What give they in return?
Our lives these deem a little thing
  While they new pleasures learn.
Oft did they dance and sing and quaff
  When far our battle rang;
Let us win pleasure now, and laugh;
  And King and Court may hang;
    May hang;
  And King and Court may hang!

I think betimes we are but slaves;
  And how is it with you?
I feel anon that we are knaves
  Another's will to do.
I doubt we need a King, or Court;—
  Ah, sharp is memory's fang!
Our sorrows die while we're at sport;
  And King and Court may hang;
    May hang;
  And King and Court may hang!

Who always would his armor wear?
  Who always hold a lance?
This day a truce to fight we swear;
  Our foes are far as France.

THE ROISTERING KNIGHTS

Up with the cup, my Comrades all!
  Each heart forget its pang.
We'll pledge to joy whate'er befall,
  And King and Court may hang;
    May hang;
  And King and Court may hang!

A VILLANELLE OF WARNING

UNCROWN while ye may, ye Rulers and
Kings;
Hide your heads from the wrath to be:
Time hath in store for ye bitter things.

Hear ye the echo of pain as it rings?
'Tis the voice of those who will yet be free.
Uncrown while ye may, ye Rulers and Kings.

Men endure your laughter, your taunts and
stings;
But be not loud in your jubilee:
Time hath in store for ye bitter things.

For Wrath cometh near; and the wind of her
wings
Is heard in the air as the sound of the sea.
Uncrown while ye may, ye Rulers and Kings.

A VILLANELLE OF WARNING

"Surely," ye whisper, "Man but clings
To his customs, and sleeps." So it is with *ye.*
Time hath in store for ye bitter things.

When man his servitude from him flings
And bursts his bonds, will ye think to flee?
Uncrown while ye may, ye Rulers and Kings;
Time hath in store for ye bitter things.

TO ELEANORE

THE sea hath a passionate heart;
He tells his love forever to the Shore;
As I, glad to be where thou art,
Say slowly, "Yea, I love thee," evermore,
Eleanore,
"I love thee, I desire thee," evermore.

With an amorous answering word
The Sea is softly echoed by the Shore;
As thou, when thy ears have heard,
Respondest unto me in passion's lore,
Eleanore,
Utterest things in passion's rapturous lore.

The Sea with outstretching arms
Arduously approaches the sweet Shore;
As I, thrilled through with thy charms,
Approach, my hands held toward thee to implore,
Eleanore,
Held toward thee thy embraces to implore.

TO ELEANORE

Encrowned with her summer flowers,
Fair in her rich green fields, rapt, waits the Shore;
As thou, in this bower of bowers,
Rose-wreathed and sweet with rose-scent, yearnest more,
Eleanore,
Yearnest to be held and folded more.

The tidal, enraptured Sea
O'erwhelms with love; kissing and clasping the Shore;
As I now o'erwhelm thee;
Lips upon lips, and holding, and hovering o'er,
Eleanore,
Holding thee close, and madly hovering o'er.

Glad of the arms that enthrall,
Against the Sea's heart held, soft laughs the Shore;
As thou, here, yielding me all,
Laughest in joy at love's rich, ample store,
Eleanore,
Mid kisses laughest at love's plenteous store.

EXPRESSION

WORDS have not power to rightly bear
The message of my soul to thee;
It lives but felt, unuttered, there,
Deep in the cells of secrecy.

But when into thine eyes I look,
And touch thy warm and trembling hand,
I read thy spirit as a book,
And know that thou dost understand.

FOUR LOVES

THE King loved a Gypsy, but the Gypsy loathed the King;
Ah me, and well-a-day!
What of his jeweled crown's worth?
His land, his gold, his castles, his throne, and signet ring—
Number them over as oft as you may,
Are worth no more than her frown's worth.

The Gypsy loved an Outlaw, but the Outlaw's hate was strong;
Heigh ho, and well-a-day!
What are all of her wiles worth?
Crisp locks, brown arms in bracelets, warm looks and passioned song—
Single them, count them as oft as you may,
Are less than his mocking smile's worth.

FOUR LOVES

The Outlaw loved a Lady, but the Lady him abhorred;
Ah me, and well-a-day!
What are his daring deeds worth?
His bravery, his trophies, his figure, and his sword—
Name them and weigh them as oft as you may,
Are less than her hateful heed's worth.

The Lady loved a King, who scorned her tender love.
Heigh ho, and well-a-day!
What are all of her powers worth?
Her sighs, her tears, her beauty; all things, to her scented glove—
Measure and sum them as oft as you may,
Are less than his weariest hour's worth.

EPIGRAM

EPIGRAM

DOUBT AND CERTAINTY

RATHER would I my Mind were all unfixed,
My Thoughts like leaves wind-blown or low or high;
Rather would I dark doubt with doubt were mixed
Than that my Life proved constant to a Lie.

RECURRENT

TO-DAY I heard the Robin call;
And saw upon the lichened wall
The jolly lover, bent to sing
And woo the spirit of the Spring.
Then to the hills I turned away;
And sought, where sheltered hollows lay,
The sweetest signs of Spring to me,
The violet and anemone.

All earth was waking once again.
I heard the wind's voice calling rain,
And gurgling laughter of the brook,
That with great joy its freedom took.
There was an odor in the air
Which at the Spring is always there;
But best of all new things to me
Were violet and anemone.

RECURRENT

I had a brother long ago;
And when the winds of March would blow
We counted days, till April came
To make old Winter but a name.
Then, hand in hand, with love made new,
Which only Spring had power to do,
We sought, most sweet to him and me,
The violet and anemone.

He was a younger son than I,
And to my heart was very nigh.
I loved his artless, blithesome ways,
I joined him in his childish plays;
And when the time had come to go
And seek the blossoms to and fro,
I let him seem the first to see
The violet and anemone.

He died one smiling April morn.
E'en at his death the Spring was born;
And soon, with hot tears falling fast,
Along the woodland path I passed.
Each thing familiar spoke of him.
I found flowers;—yes. My eyes grew dim.
I wept; but ah, sweet, sweet to me
Seemed violet and anemone!

RECURRENT

Stay, Summer, with your store of flowers,
And choirs of birds, and tropic hours.
Stay Autumn, with your red and gold,
And fruit, and harvest manifold!
They come! I welcome Winter well;
For after him there falls the spell
Of Spring, made dearest unto me
By violet and anemone.

EPIGRAM

THE POET'S HEART

THE poet's heart is like the rugged earth
That in dark depths a priceless jewel bears.
Long time he finds within it naught of worth,
Then comes upon a treasure unawares.

VON PLEHVE DEAD

I PITY Thee, low lying where thou art!
Not for thy end, or for thy dying pain
I pity thee, or wish thee life again,
But for thy nature, where love had no part.
I pity thee thy cruel, soulless art,
Thou spying, torturing Monster! Thy disdain
Of human life I pity. Ah, that stain,
Blood red, of murder, through and through thine heart!

Twisted abortion of great Nature's womb,
Too long thou lived'st midst victims rent and torn.
I pity thy manhood and its rage to doom;
I pity thy youth's foul bud of blossoming scorn;
I pity thy childhood, that Earth made thee room.
I pity thee that ever thou wast born!

A CURSE

CURSÈD be bondage of mind,
Cursèd forever and ever;
Cursèd the creed that doth bind,
With a veil of the lies it can wind,
The eyes of its vassals, that never
Truth may give sight to the blind!
Cursèd be bondage of mind;
Cursèd forever and ever!

Cursèd be bondage of tongue,
Cursèd forever and ever;
Cursèd the deeds which have wrung
Hearts, till lips spoke not or sung;
Sealing life's speech up, to sever
Wisdom from aged and young!
Cursèd be bondage of tongue;
Cursèd forever and ever!

A CURSE

Cursèd be bondage of hand,
  Cursèd forever and ever;
Cursèd the might, the command,
That is strong 'gainst the right, to withstand;
  That chaineth all highest endeavor,
All loftiest deeds that are planned!
Cursèd be bondage of hand;
  Cursèd forever and ever!

Cursèd be bondage, thrice cursed;
  Cursèd forever and ever;
Cursèd the last with the first;
The slight to endure, with the worst;
  What resists when the spirit would sever;
What is strongest when freedom would burst!
Cursèd be bondage; thrice cursed;
  Cursèd forever and ever!

A SONG

A BREEZE blew over the fields this morn.
Sing low, my Heart, sing low!
And toyed and kissed with the fair green corn
That lately the glistening silk has worn.
Sing low, my Heart,
For you know, my Heart,
How always the hurricanes blow.

The waves came over the sea last night.
Sing low, my Heart, sing low!
And softly broke in a foam milk-white;
Broke, and embraced the land in delight.
Sing low, my Heart,
For you know, my Heart,
How the sea storms overthrow.

He spake sweet words to my ear one day.
Sing low, my Heart, sing low!
And wooed me, and kissed me, and bade me obey;
And won me, and having me, tossed me away.
Sing low, my Heart,
For you know, my Heart,
What craft a false love may show.

NIGHT

THE hours of day at length are past;
And see! How swift there cometh One:
Night, daughter of the unnamed Vast!
Her hand can darken e'en the Sun.

Upon her great, calm, duskèd brow
The bright, star-jeweled Moon crown rests.
All things obey around her now,
With peace in Earth's uncounted breasts.

Her rule is sleep. Upon her throne,
Sphered in the dark midst silver sheen,
She sits in majesty alone,
Sole Empress and accepted Queen.

DEATH IN LIFE

WIND of November,
Angered and gusty,
Through the grove searching
Forward and back,

Findest no verdure?
Did one before thee
Rend their green garments,
Strip the trees bare?

Art thou unnoted,
Thou and thy terrors,
Wind, which forebodest
Worse things to come?

DEATH IN LIFE

Doth naught resist thee?
Is there no moaning?
Waits the grove silent?
Stands it as dead?

Like the trees I am.
'Twas but this morning
That a woe met me;
I shrank not back.

I was not singing;
I was not laughing;
I was not hoping.
Why should I shrink?

All I had cherished
Long since had left me:
Not one joy lingered
Or hope's dim star.

Fate in his harvest
Early had garnered
My last small gladness,
My final dream.

DEATH IN LIFE

Sorrow's November,
Sadder than sorrow,
That could not touch me
After the past.

Nothing worth taking
Woe found still hidden;
Only some shadows:
Life that had been.

I made no protest;
No tears I offered.
Woe was too late there;
My soul was dead.

COMPENSATION

ARDOR, song, and laughter,
And thereafter
Heavy grief, and tears;
Joy today; tomorrow
Serving sorrow—
Do we thus count our years?

Nay; but if each gladness
Dies in sadness,
And pleasure yields to pain;
Rapture, too, must follow
Woe grown hollow,
As sunlight follows rain.

Must follow, and find sweeter,
And completer
What was sweet before;
The good that in its dying
Left us sighing,
And saying, "This no more!"

COMPENSATION

Nay; mourn not, but hearken:
  Nights that darken,
    Glowing dawn will bring.
Frost doth aye invoke us
  Forth the crocus,
    And bids the robin sing.

Hoary old December
  Hides an ember,
    The fire of fruit and flowers.
The testy bee, that stingeth,
  Nectar bringeth,
    At last to make it ours.

The storm that wildly rages,
  Soon assuages
    The thirst of growing things.
Upon the March winds riding,
  Birds are biding,
    With northward pointed wings.

Woe, that seems unbending,
  Maketh ending
    When thou thinkest not;
And lets thee so recapture
  Older rapture,
    For a newer lot.

COMPENSATION

Grief anon will visit
  The exquisite
    Palace of delight;
But one as swift pursues him,
  And subdues him;—
    He hath a greater might.

AN INSPIRATION

AS ON the sunset way
I wandered yesterday,
A sudden light
Came in the skies so grey;
The bodeful clouds were massed
Where the Sun's chariot passed,
But from his height
O'erwhelming flame he cast.

Then felt I like the Sun;
And courage new begun
Bade me return
To do the deed not done.
I turned upon my quest;
And pausing once to rest,
Saw clouds still burn:
A glory filled the West!

PLUTUS AND DEMOS

PLUTUS hath riches of untold degree;
He goeth to bed in gold, and riseth up;
And Demos, ah, none live so poor as he,
Who knoweth not if he shall dine or sup.

Plutus hath wheaten loaves and dainty fare;
Plutus hath raiment fine, and purchased art.
Demos grows old in youth with withering care;
But Demos, though 'tis broken, hath a heart.

THE GUILLOTINE

MORNING breaks there in the east;
The stars pale in the sky.
And we shall see a marriage feast
Before the sun comes nigh.
The guests e'en now are on their way.
Those voices which I hear
Are joyous all. Make holiday,
My friends; I lend an ear!

Yes, time has come when I must wed:
The barber told last night
Of how the service would be said
'Twixt dawn and candle light.
The priest will all his vestments wear;
And I, with hands behind,
Shall bow and kiss the maiden there
Who's wholly to my mind.

They gather round the altar now
  Outside the barrèd gates.
Great store of choicest gifts they show
  For him who harks and waits.
Yes, sing! This is my marriage morn,
  And song should usher in
That day, a bridegroom, cleanly shorn,
  His willing bride will win.

Scarce thirty years of life are mine,
  But I am amply wise.
I know the water from the wine,
  And the spirit from the eyes.
And I am glad the hour is here
  When I must know the rest;
With naught to learn there's naught to fear.
  The end be happiest!

Scarce thirty years, and I have learned
  Man's strange, unstable heart:
Whom once he loved is later spurned,
  Perhaps, from man apart.
Whom once man loved, at last may gain
  As payment for his strife,
Bars and thick walls to hide his pain,
  Or may die beneath the knife.

THE GUILLOTINE

How fair my Love is, tall and fair;
  And calm in every hour!
She's standing like a lily, where,
  Within her secret bower,
She's made all ready for my kiss
  By faithful hands and kind.
In truth, the thought of it is bliss;
  A rapture of the mind!

Good Jailor, help me here to dress.
  My coat is streaked with mud;
This knitted kerchief, I confess,
  Was dipped in royal blood.
Give now my cap of liberty;
  At last my garb is well.
'Tis in your hand, the second key;
  Unlock, unlock my cell.

My bride has left her tiring place;
  Hark, how the people shout!
The swaying crowd would see her face:
  It is a joyous rout.
Again now, "Vive la Guillotine!"
  How sweetly sounds her name.
Who weds with her is proud, I ween;
  He weds a noble dame.

Do I regret when death is nigh
  The service which I brought?
Now, that the hour has come to die,
  Was all too dearly bought?
Mankind, my brothers, I forgive;
  You need not pardon me;
A wiser race sometime shall live,
  When the peoples can be free.

She comes down from the cart at last,
  With him who does the deed.
The time is nigh, the past is past;
  Well may all measures speed.
She takes her place where men can look
  And greet us when 'tis done,
And say, "How well his kiss she took:
  None fairer 'neath the sun!"

My bride awaits me! Hist! A sound
  Far down the corridor.
That heavy tread upon the ground;
  Ten guards have I, or more.
You honor me, good fellows all;
  Five on each side, quite dumb.
The bell rings on the prison wall—
  I come, Sweet Love, I come!

THE MODERN STOIC

LET me, while I may live, move straight along,
Neither to wild hopes given nor dismay;
Neither to aims that beckon far astray,
Nor to dark doubts which round the spirit throng.
Yes, let me, meteor, star, or sun, be strong
Upon the path of my appointed way;
Today, tomorrow, still as yesterday,
A stoic life amidst the driven throng.

If there be good to which I shall attain,
It will be so; and let me feel 'tis well,
Nor dally with self-praise; and if time's wane
Find me with no fair fruits, no worth to tell,
May I pass calmly, nor look back again,
On through the gates of Death, a Star that fell.

WINTER AND SPRING

ROUGH Winter with his icy hands
Grasps rivers, lakes, and lands;
And in his freezing hold they stay
Many and many a day.

Till Maiden Spring, led by the sun,
Finds where his feet have run;
And coming on him without guile,
Kills him with a smile.

LOVE AND DEATH

THOU Sea, that waitest, calling glad and strong,
Beyond that island shore,
Clothed in her own white splendor, mid a throng
Of stars that lead before,
The fervid Moon hastes, harkening to thy song,
To yield herself, enraptured, to thine arms once more!

Thou yearning Moon, afar, swift on thy way
To Ocean's mighty breast,
Here he awaits thee. All his voices say,
"I love thee!" east and west.
The unwilling hours are long throughout the day,
Until thou risest warm with love, to find thy rest!

O Moon! O Sea! I love one who is dead;
And no help may there be!
Where waits She now, My Own, who far has fled?
Your joy, my misery,
Is this one hour. Here is your greeting said;
I cannot go to her! She cannot come to me!

EPIGRAM

ART

THE Tree of Life had grown through time untold,
And branch and leaf had each fulfilled its part;
There came a perfect spring with sun of gold—
The tree burst forth in bloom; and that was Art.

RONDEAU

HOPES AND REGRETS

HOPES and regrets: we cherish these
At home; beyond the stranger seas;
In youth, or when age points the way.
Such only, thought will hold and stay
Till life's cup drains down to the lees.

The best is what we hope to seize,
And seeking, fail of; that which flees.
Two things we cling to while we may:
Hopes and regrets.

Things gained are lost; they cannot please.
But when fate fastens with its keys
The portals sought through night and day,
We have, for all things held away,
For lost joys, wept upon our knees,
Hopes and regrets.

THE GRAVES OF SHELLEY AND KEATS

PROTESTANT CEMETARY, ROME

IS THIS where Death his jealous state doth keep
Over two glorious ones, who early passed
Out of the ways of song and into the Vast,
Out of being into sealèd sleep?
Is this the spot where Joy lies buried deep;
Where Hope and Love are hushed; where prisoned fast,
Young power and high desire are cold at last,
Moving no more? I smile, and cannot weep.
Ye trees; grey pyramid cleaving the blue air *
Within whose shade the flowers with beauty bent,
Grow thickly; ivied walls; and lingering wind;
Green grass, and sunlight; is there otherwhere
Fitter for poets on whose heads were spent
The scorn and maledictions of Mankind?

* An old Roman tomb.

HEARING THEE SING

JANUARY

HEARING thee sing, the sweet summer is
mine again,
Though it be winter and icy airs sting.
Above spreads the blue; I can feel the sun
shine again;
Flowers scent the breeze; the grape's on the
vine again.
My life is in June, the ripe sequel of spring,
Hearing thee sing!

Hearing thee sing, I hear bobolinks call again;
The song-thrush is fluting, and preening her
wing.
From his haunt in the maple the robin lets fall
again
Velvety tones; and the orioles all again
Strike crystal bells. I stand wondering,
Hearing thee sing!

HEARING THEE SING

Hearing thee sing, the brown bees gather
sweet again,
And the soft showers and night dews their
cool service bring.
The peach and the apple blush 'neath summer's
heat again;
The dusk-time and dawn-time, they come on
glad feet again.
I know all the joys which great nature can
bring,
Hearing thee sing!

Hearing thee sing, I feel my heart thrill again;
Long was its winter, but now cometh spring.
As the flowers feel the rain, I can feel my life
fill again
With the rich fire of love, and passion distill
again
As wine from the fruit. All at thy feet
I fling,
Hearing thee sing!

A JUDGMENT

YOUTH makes a funeral for its woes,
Builds tombs unto its grief,
And mourns like one 'midst winter snows
Life's fallen flower or leaf.

A gracious sight is stronger Age,
With joy, and faith to dare;
Which braves life's storms though wild they rage,
And every branch be bare.

NOVEMBER

THIS is November's day,
Her voice, the sad wind grieves;
The skies are woeful and gray;
Her tears drip from eaves.
The latest flowers decay;
O'er them the spider weaves;
And all along the way
Is thick with dank and withered fallen leaves.

This is November's hour.
Bare branches sprawl and show;
Limp round the trellised bower
The mildewed vine hangs low.
In shelter sparrows cower,
Borne onward to and fro,
Lead clouds fly fast, and lower
In portent of the coming frost and snow.

IN THE HOUR OF EXECUTION

1887

IS this what we must bear, O Freedom, Mother,
To see thy face and but to touch thy hand?
Is there no easier way?
Must death another take, and yet another,
While tears and lamentations through the land
Show the great price we pay?
Yet, if it must be, Freedom, none say nay.

See, Thou, these waiting for the hangman's halter;—
These friends of man, must these be given to death?
Freedom, we ask again!
If in the sacrifice we do not falter,
Wilt thou repay us for their strangled breath?
Wilt thou come nearer men?
Thou wilt, we hope. With groans we give these, then.

IN THE HOUR OF EXECUTION

The debt is paid!—Thy martyrs lie before us,
Their mute lips speak thy words into our ears,
And bid us seek thee far.
Freedom, we know thy sun shall yet shine o'er us;
And looking up, exalted, through our tears,
We cry, beneath thy star,
"Take these! Take us, if need be; thine we are!"

THE MOON LOOKED DOWN

THE Moon looked down in the night;
Through its own beams golden-white,
The Moon looked down.
Where souls were pent in sleep,
And some did revel keep,
While others waked to weep,
The Moon looked down.

On the face of a dreaming child
That murmured softly and smiled,
The Moon looked down.
Out of the shadow came
A woman given to shame,
Whose heart was whelmed in flame.
The Moon looked down.

THE MOON LOOKED DOWN

Cold death was moving there;
It touched a life most fair;
The Moon looked down.
Upon its mother's breast
A new babe sighed in rest;
I deemed the mother blest;
The Moon looked down.

Two lovers pledged in a kiss,
Lost in wildest bliss;
The Moon looked down.
One with a heart of hate
Hid him to lie in wait
And be his fellow's fate;
The Moon looked down.

Upon some, lacking food,
The prey of fortune rude,
The Moon looked down.
Upon a festival,
Where hearts were happy, all,
Nor heard the slow hours call,
The Moon looked down.

THE MOON LOOKED DOWN

On failure, on success,
On woe, on happiness,
The Moon looked down.
Upon fair hope, and fear,
Glad smile, and bitter tear,
Sweet dream, and memory sere
The Moon looked down.

Not holding back from aught;
Bland, and with calmness fraught,
The Moon looked down.
Its light it freely gave
To master and to slave;
On just man and on knave
The Moon looked down.

I called aloud, "O Moon,
Why for all these thy boon?"
The Moon looked down.
"Thine equal light is shed
On blest and cursèd head,—
Answer me;" I plead.
The Moon looked down.

ROUNDEL

REST

REST: Night is come. Farewell to Day!
The drowsy stars gleam east and west.
Soft, wandering night-winds seem to say,
"Rest."

Thy heart within thee finds it best
To put both joy and care away,
And turn to sleep, a welcome guest.

One sweetest memory, now and aye
Warm treasured in thine inmost breast,
Will whisper, "With the sun's last ray,
"Rest."

WRONG NOT LOVE

NAY, think not thou that Love can never die;
Or that it will show mercy, and forbear
To leave the stainèd soul, once clean and fair,—
The blackened soul that bids white Truth good-by!
It may not wait the twinkling of an eye;
It goes upon that moment thou dost dare
To yield to powers that wrong it, but a share
In thee: Shall life with death lie down and lie?

Nay, Love is like some fair and delicate flower,
Which in the summer shows its glory long;
Drinking the sun, the breeze, the cooling shower,
But dying with frost. Love liveth glad and strong
In Love's own time; but hurt, droops in an hour,
Withering at the poisoned touch of wrong.

EPIGRAM

EPIGRAM

ON AN OLD POET

THE strings are loosened, and the harp of gold
Stands almost voiceless; eaten of the rust.
At times the Master, rousing as of old,
Draws mighty music from it in its dust.

WHEN I AM DEAD

WHEN I am dead, friends, carve no words
On marble for an epitaph;
Nor raise to me a splendid tomb;
At such things Death would laugh.

But hold me in your faithful thoughts
While briefly life and thought are lent.
Your Tears shall be my ample praise,
Your Love my monument.

THE FEATHERED STOIC

THRICE black against the white,
A black blot on the snow
Spreads wings to start its flight:
A crow.

A stoic of the wood;
Famine in his breast
Borne with what fortitude
Seems best.

The cold is hard to bear;
The wind is rough and raw.
Hark! On the frozen air,
A caw!

INDIAN SUMMER

LISTEN: we love Summer best
When she stays, the transient guest
Of Autumn; when the seasons' fruit
Is ripe, and aspects rich, to suit,
Are on the fields and woods; when red
And gold, and brown, beneath the foot and overhead,
Announce as glowing colors may
The Year's long, happy holiday.

Not at once her splendors die;
Not at once she bids good-by;
But loitering wheresoe'er she will,
She keeps her state and beauty still;
Wooing Time to pause the while;
Tempting him with song and many a gladsome smile;
Till the greybeard can but wait,
Fingering his gage of fate.

Yes; the maid, all loth to go,
Nooks and places green doth know,
Where her tender flowers we find
Nodding in the autumn wind;
Where the brown belated bee,
Still storing sweetest sweets, goes buzzing lazily;
And a lingering, longing bird,
Sings the rarest ever heard.

The cattle find new juicy grass,
And through the fields the sheep-bells pass
On to the vales, where wintergreen
And new-sprung flagroot spears are seen.
The muskrat plunges from the bank;
And startled minnows, shining, dart with many a prank;
And dandelions scatter gold
E'en from the roadside o'er the world.

Oft the sun when day is new,
Will drink the heavy-beaded dew
In a trice, and burn as hot
As erstwhile on the ripening plot;
And eyes far-looking everywhere,
Can see his fervors in the moted, wavering air;

While rustles answer from the trees
A slow and sleepy, wandering breeze.

Anon, at dusk, an insect voice
Untouched of doubt, will glad rejoice;
And scents of hay and clover balm
Will faintly fall; while in the calm,
Such stars outwink, and such a moon
Shines o'er the hills as blessed the rapturous
nights of June.
Ah, yes; then we love Summer best:
Departing she shows loveliest.

EPIGRAM

EPIGRAM

THE NUDE IN ART

"TO the pure all things are pure;"
The body's beauty with the rose.
Whose soul is carrion must endure
To find its stench where'er he goes.

AUTUMN

NOW stands the rich year in a fair array,
And with a free, an overflowing hand
Lavishes blessings on the happy land;
Fruitage of many a former arduous day.
Her youthful, changing garb of green and grey,
Seedtime's accoutrements, the summer band
That delved unceasingly at her command,—
All these, all effort has she put away.

By day a mellow sun, soft-breathing airs,
A silence like sweet music in a swoon,
And ripened fruit hung o'er the orchard wall;
By night the calm, majestic harvest moon,
And joyous voices echoing unawares—
All these proclaim the timely festival.

DERELICT

HER sails in rags, her rigging torn,
Her rudder broken at the post,
I see a vessel onward borne
Like some strange, silent ghost.

Abandoned by her crew at last,
When storms have rent her weakened bulk,
She wanders on with splintered mast,—
A wretched, ruined hulk.

This wreck was once a noble craft,
And sailed afar in strength and pride;
This old hull, rotting fore and aft,
Knew all the Oceans wide.

Broad winged she flew from land to land,
Nor feared the wrathful wind and waves;
Now Death is round her, either hand;
Below lie waiting graves.

And what am I, that shed no tears,
But blankly stare across the Sea?
A wreck upon the tide of years:
A ruin, verily.

DERELICT

Without a compass or a star,
  Blown by the doubtful winds of chance
Hither and yonder, o'er the bar
  Of treacherous circumstance.

Was I once glad? Thrilled I with life?
  As I had dreamed, I see me now.
Once in my bosom strength was rife,
  And pride shown on my brow.

'Tis gone! The world has worn me down;
  It took my pride, my joy, my strength,
Looked at me last with sneer and frown,
  Then cast me off, at length.

Now lacking joy and lacking pain,
  The past outblotted in a mist,
I nothing deem of loss or gain:
  I live not; I exist.

And look and hear, I know not why;
  And dully gaze upon my fate.
Sometime, I deem, this death will die,
  Or be it soon or late.

EPIGRAM

EPIGRAM

THE LAST QUESTION

WHY do we vaunt us o'er our being here?
This life is but a touch, a look, a breath;—
A pause 'twixt Childhood's first salt, bitter tear,
And Love's last kiss upon the lips of Death.

UNFORGOTTEN

DEAD leaves lie on the ground,
And dead hopes lie in the heart;
The leaves will not be there
When Spring and her bands depart.

But the winds of memory stir
Dead hopes till thy latest day:
No Spring in the heart may come
To cover, and hide them away.

RETURN

SPRING is the year's first flame; Summer the fire;
And Autumn the reddening embers on the pyre.
Winter is the ashes cold and dead.
But wait;—for Time gives back thine heart's desire.

The new year comes. Bent down, old grey Time blows
Till but the tiniest spark grows red and glows.
Fed with the substance of the gathering days,
It burns; And Lo! The violet, then the rose.

TO A DANCER

THOU Daughter of the East, with midnight eyes,
And midnight hair caught up in loops of gold;
Thy throat like cream, thy face of flower-like mould;
Full-bosomed, and with supple, tapering thighs—
Anon, while music plays, thou dost arise,
And keeping time with castanets, unfold
The mazes of a dance, which, to behold
Dwarf's into naught the soul's supreme surmise!

If passion ever had a monument
Thou art that thing. With steps which fall as snow,
And laughing lips, thou gildest to and fro,
In mad, voluptuous bendings; aye unspent;
Tossing from fingers kisses opulent;
Thine eyes with asking glances all aglow.

EPIGRAM

EPIGRAM

THE CHANGELING

A SHAPE in clanking fetters paused to say,
"I am not Love; nay, Love knows not these
lands.
I took his place on that unhappy day
When gyves were locked upon his loyal hands!"

RONDEAU

WHEN SUMMER COMES

WHEN Summer comes, and skies are blue;
When birds have found one heart for two;
When flowers are blooming everywhere,
And woods and fields are green and fair,
What joyance falls to me and you!

The country ways we wander through
From morning sun till evening dew,
Without a sigh, without a care,
When Summer comes.

Dear Friend, then all our dreams come true.
And if our thoughts are slight and few,
'Tis but because a fate most rare
Would have no gloom to follow there,
With wonder making all things new
When Summer comes.

ROSES OF LOVE

A ROSE tree which but bears a single rose
Gives not because of this to that one flower
A heightened beauty, or a richer dower
Of perfume, or life longer by an hour;
Nay, better, brighter far the garden shows
Where many a blossom blows.

Who has not seen, by some green garden side
A limp and mildewed rose tree, on whose thorn,
Scarce lifted up to greet its natal morn
A colorless and scentless bud is born?
A single bloom is all it bears. Denied,
'Twere better had it died.

A heart that yields itself to various hearts
Counts not as loss division of its store;
Nor blooms in love less sweet in blooming more.
It gathers strength; and blessing o'er and o'er,
Fulfils itself in all its proper parts
With love's fine arduous arts.

Hear, ye, who cry, "I love, and love but one!"
Your life has struck its roots in barren ground,
Where no rich juices of the soil are found;
Where only dust and withered stems abound.
Where summer's rains help not when they are done,
And fruitless shines the sun!

IN DARKEST MOOD

WHERE'ER thou goest,
O Soul, thou knowest
That these shall ever be:
The heart which yearneth;
The fate that spurneth:
The joy not made for thee.

Ay, Fellow Spirit,
Give heed and hear it;
Thou wilt not say me nay;
This life is sorrow.
Hope claims tomorrow;
Regret hath yesterday!

HOPE

HOPE is a Star.
Dim and afar
If it must ever be,
Thou, through the night
Go seek its Light;
It is the Lure for thee.

It is no Sun,
Nor seems it one;
But it fades not away.
Though dark woes fall,
Or one or all,
Hope shines as shine it may.

When clouds obscure
Still be thou sure
That Hope will flash anon;
A planet spark,
Which thou may'st mark
As cloud by cloud moves on.

HOPE

Joy comes and goes;
Frost slays the rose;
Time laughs at summer's wane.
Sweet Song is hushed,
And the heart is crushed,
But Hope will still remain.

O'er seas of tears,
O'er gulfs of fears,
O'er failure's steepest hill,
Hope's faithful beam
Glows on supreme,
And lights a prospect still.

LIBERTY AND THE COMMUNE

WHITE Lily, springing in the life of France,
Freedom, whose roots clasped round the hearts of men,
Scarce had'st thou time to burst in blossom, when
Hate of thy beauty rose in dark mischance;
And looking on thy spotless bloom askance,
Tyranny made thy garden like a fen
With streams of human blood to whelm thee; then
Mockingly laughed, and bade thy growth advance.

Midst pools of gore with riven corpses lined,
Thy pure white petals bruised and dripping red,
Still did'st thou greet the world that thought thee dead;
Yea, even in that clotted flood did'st find
Food, Freedom; and, slow lifting up thy head,
Lived'st, to inspire at last the world, mankind.

AGE AND LOVE

IN AN OLD MANNER

OLD Age, testy o'er his woes,
With palsied hands and purple nose,
And voice that whistled aye in speech,
Spied lovers kissing 'neath a beech,
Struck his staff upon the ground;
Squinted failing eyes, and frowned;
Mumbling as he turned away,
"Kissing is but children's play."

What can Old Age know of love?
Can Winter aught of springtime tell?
True lovers laugh if he reprove.
Sweet lovers, love ye well!

Old Age totters near the grave.
Nothing of him Time can save
For sweetest uses known to Youth.
He hath but bitter thoughts. In sooth,

All his hopes died long ago.
His heart is empty, could ye know;
Or, but the shell which held the heart
Remains, to falsely play its part.

What can Old Age know of love?
  Can Winter aught of springtime tell?
True lovers laugh if he reprove.
  Sweet lovers, love ye well!

WORDSWORTH

SHAKESPEARE and Shelley fill my day,
With others great, who wear the bay
As poets sovereign;
But while soft moods upon me fall
I choose me then above them all,
Wordsworth, the tenderest of singing men!

Who knew the wood felicities;
All languages of flowers and trees;
Who met oft and again
The shyer spirits of wild places,
And learned from them their powers and graces:
Loved Wordsworth, tenderest of singing men!

How oft through woods and fields he went,
Heart-free, on Nature's life intent;
Till, fixed within his ken,
Her secret solace and delight
Were held, and shown to human sight.
Rare Wordsworth, tenderest of singing men!

Not less he knew the common ground
Of human dreams and hopes: he found
The common heart of men;
That "touch of nature" which makes sweet
Smooth paths or rugged to the feet.
Dear Wordsworth, tenderest of singing men!

He held his hand upon the life,
The woe, the rage, the hope, the strife
Of Earth's each denizen;
And felt its joys, its dreams, its fears;
And mingled with it smiles and tears.
Wise Wordsworth, tenderest of singing men!

He sang such songs as touch the heart
To sympathy and love. His art
Is true as he was, when,
Guileless and free he sought to live,
And give to life what love could give.
True Wordsworth, tenderest of singing men!

The great inspire the soul to deeds
Too high for praise; where glory leads;
But when I falter, then,
Give me the deep, the feeling strain
That wins the soul away from pain,
In Wordsworth, tenderest of singing men.

SHELLEY'S DEATH

WELL was it, Shelley, that death came to thee
Not through sad, slow disease, upon the shore,
But far from man, midst sudden clash and roar
Of wind and wave, on the tempestuous Sea.
Well did'st thou wish; no fitter thing could be
Than that thy Spirit, which an aspect wore
Unearthly fair, should pass in secret; more
Like kindred powers of beauteous mystery.

Thy death was not like death; thou wert like a Star,
That, when the moon at the horizon dips,
Shines clear and dazzling from some region far,
Beauty and night's most strange apocalypse,
Anon to quench its light in clouds that bar
All suddenly, and leave it in eclipse.

IN SONG

OFT when I court the Muse
She will disdain to come;
And if she scorns to heed
I stammer, or am dumb.

The golden thought eludes,
Nor jeweled words I know;
Hushed, deep within the breast,
The heart beats cold and slow.

But when, by beauty wrought,
I feel the joy of life,
And clear in vision, learn
The glory that is rife,—

The glory of the world,
Its wondrous night and morn;
And all its seas and shores
Where loveliness is born;

IN SONG

Looking on the moon
  That out of night doth rise,
Or on the stars, or flowers
  Which match the starry skies;

Or hearing how the air
  Grows vocal with the birds,
Or how the streams devote
  Their speech to mellow words;

Or knowing love, or hope,
  Or trust that fears no ill,
Or strength in lofty deeds,
  Crowned with a temperate will;

A fount of song will rise
  Afar within my soul,
And flow in utterance forth
  Clear, to its destined goal.

Ah, then I sing with ease!
  Dispelled is my eclipse.
The Muse has come, and lays
  Her fingers on my lips.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE PACIFIC

BALBOA, it was given unto thee
To dream a titan dream. This western land
Thy prow found twice, and then fate's high command
Bade thee still westward, strong, and brave and free.
In Darien thou soughtest what might be
Over the mountains for King Ferdinand:
A height; a hush:—Thy startled vision scanned
A vast, unknown, horizon-kissing sea!
The Atlantic crossed, what were those waters wide,
North, south, and west, that engulfed the setting sun?
It thrilled thee as thou stood'st upon the marge.
Which Peoples would there cease, and which abide;
And what vast deeds would yet by man be done
In such a world? For, ah, the World was large!

THE UNFADING FLOWER

DEAR One, the flowers of summer all are dead;
The wild March wind howls with a boistrous glee
Across the garden, where no life may be
Until the breath of Spring shall blow instead.
One flower which fails not when the year has fled
We cherish now, more sweet to thee and me
Than all the bloom and glory scattered free
Upon the earth when Spring and Summer wed:

Our love. That knows no sad, uncertain days,
No mournful Autumn winds, no killing frost,
No time at last to put its beauty by,
No hush of Winter when all life is lost.
It lives; and gives us proof in countless ways
That it can only die when we must die.

INEXHAUSTIBLE

SHE pours her love out as a draft,
My heart's thirst to appease,
And I the glorious drink have quaffed
To drain it to the lees.

But ever as I yield the cup,
And doubt there can be more,
From her soul's fountain filling up,
It brims and bubbles o'er.

INSPIRED BY LOVE

I MY lamp of life have lit
At thy passion's flame:
My hand hath its prowess, fit;
Gone are sloth and shame.

Nothing gave me touch of fire
Till thy spirit rose;
Now my soul mounts high and higher
Straining from repose.

There, close at the gate of life,
Down the darksome way,
I have strained to hear the strife
And see the torches play.

Past me hastened many a soul
To strength and freedom vowed;
Leaning forward toward the goal,
Each with his bright torch rode.

Back before me others went,
With swords all bloody rust:
Pale for pain; their courage spent
And banners trailed in dust.

Still I moved not; yet my hands
Were folded, and I stood
Without a wish to join those bands:
My soul aloof from good.

Without a dream of aught but ease:
An idle looker-on.
All cold alike to thoughts like these,
And suffering pale and wan.

Till Thou—But I must mount and ride:
I do not fear to fail;
My spirit chafing in its pride,
Would fly as flies the gale.

I cannot think how others droop;
Their spirits weak may prove;
A wound, repulse, may injure hope,
But I am based on Love.

INSPIRED BY LOVE

Put but one kiss upon my brow;
A moment hold my hand;
And gladly I will leave thee now
To in the battle stand.

I have lit my lamp of life
At thy passion's flame.
I am girded for the strife;
Death is but a name!

TO AUTUMN ROSES

GARDEN OF THE LUXEMBOURG, PARIS

FAIR roses on your wind-blown briars,
Now sweet, or bitter, is it now
To wave and turn and bow,
In the slight warmth the days allow
The sun to yield you from his fires?
For now the sun retires.

Your leaves are russet round the place;
But flawless still upon your stalks
Beside the winding walks,
You blush unto the time, that mocks.
But what is showing in each face,—
A glad, or hapless grace?

Just now some petals fell, and turned,
Seeming reluctant, to the grass;
Do your souls cry "Alas!"
And faltering, wait for death to pass?
Or was it, as while June fires burned,
To still live on you yearned?

TO AUTUMN ROSES

I cannot say, or if you mourn,
  And ruefully recall the past,
  With joys which did not last,
  Or sweetly wish to hold life fast,
And in fair future days adorn
This spot, where you were born.

Do you, grief with grief, drooping, add,
  Knowing summertime is o'er;
  And hope not any more
  For beauty that you proudly wore
In the old days when days were glad;
Waiting death, all sad?

Or is that odor faintly sweet,
  The breath of hope from out your hearts,
  Which feel not woe's keen darts,
  But joy, despite all sorrow's smarts;
Hearts which still with strength can beat,
And keep their life complete?

Is life still so good to hold;
  Is it now so rich to be,
  That in an ecstacy
  You linger here, and lavish free
Your beauty, spite of pinching cold,
As in the days of gold?

LOOKING ON THE SIERRAS

ETERNAL winter lives on that far height;
Immortal summer fills this vale below;
But those vast peaks of pure, unstained snow
Look down where lush flowers bloom and birds delight,
And rich fruits ripen sweet through summer's might,
Their solemn presence harmonizing so,
With these in gracious contrast. Gaze; and know
That man is ever noblest in man's sight
When, midst those acts familiar, fair, and good,
The flowers of fellowship shown day by day,
He still maintains his strength, his hardihood
Of life, and keeps his individual way
Austerely. Through the grandeur of his blood
Scorning to basely rule, or to obey.

THE AVOWAL

EACH heart rang like a lyre.
Love's thrilling, sweet desire,
Grown strong through June's fair days of comradeship,
Trembled upon the lip,
And all our life awoke.
But still no word was said;
Till, either heart, full fed
With rose-rich, honeyed dreams of youthful love,
Must die or sing thereof;
And suddenly he spoke.

"I love you," were his words.
And like strange songs of birds,
Strange in their raptures, made not for this earth,
But of a nobler birth,
They echoed love's behest.
"I love you," I replied;
And from the glad world, wide,
All music seemed to come and thrill my speech,
In tones above hope's reach.
I fell upon his breast.

Glad eyes gazed down in mine;
And in them showed that sign
Wherewith love marks those souls who love love more
Than they loved life before.
He kissed me in his bliss.
My true eyes mirrored true
The joy my spirit knew,
Sweeter than thought had deemed that joy could be;
And sealing him and me,
I gave him kiss for kiss.

THE DEATH OF WALT WHITMAN

DEAD, at last, the Poet lies,
Darkness dwelling in his eyes:
He will never more arise.

Here the final goal is won;
Here the life which glad begun
Finds its songs and service done.

Now the honoring words are said.
Greenest laurel wreathes his head.
Peans echo for the dead.

Ye who loved him, if his birth
Seemed a blessing to the earth,
What ye give is great in worth.

THE DEATH OF WALT WHITMAN

Now at end of all his ways,
Fit it is ye yield him praise,
Who filled with melody your days.

But, ye who loved not, lie not now:
Lay no laurel on his brow,
Nor hide your hate with falsest vow.

Do him not the coward wrong
Of granting all his power in song,
Who sang unloved of you so long.

He needs not you to give him fame
Who oft of old reviled his name.
Your blame is praise; your praise is blame.

Better, than that, all praise should cease!
Now his heart has found release,
Leave him lying there in peace.

Hated, and loved, 'twas his fair fate
To love all men. Who loved him, wait,
Where he lies cold to love and hate.

MOTHER-HEART

A LITTLE boy,
With eyes of joy
Amidst his curls of jet,
Dancing along
With laugh and song,
A childless mother met.

She starts, and pales;
Her slight strength fails;
A mist comes o'er her eyes;
And as in dreams,
She sees, or seems
To look where her child lies.

Herself but young;
Her spirit wrung
By nights and days of death,
She does not know
To ease her woe;
She gasps, and holds her breath.

His face so fair,
She sees it there;
She turns her eyes away.
Her heart is wrought
With tortured thought:
"Some mother joys to-day!"

Her child is dead;
Her joy is fled;—
Why melts that look of stone?
While her heart breaks,
'Tis that she makes
All children, now, her own.

She gazed with grief;
But this was brief:
Again the small face smiled.
The woe that sears
Is quenched in tears.
She kissed him:—*"My sweet child."*

A DREAM OF THE STORM

WHAT are those strange breathings,
Those murmurous sounds and seethings,
When day is fair and warm?
The Southwind's laboring horses
Pant adown their courses
With the chariot of the Storm.

What is that wide darkness,
That black and hurtling starkness,
Swift thrown across the sky?
The Tempest, all investing,
Naught his course arresting,
Dims the Sun's bright eye.

What is that deep rumbling,
That titan roar and grumbling,
Which racks the startled air?
The challenge which he utters
In shouts and muffled mutters,
To daunt, and fright and dare.

What are those fierce flashings,
Those sudden, fiery lashings,
  Which flame along his way?
His rapiers, whirled in anger
Against the blue sky's languor,
  Where calm stands far at bay.

What are those wild currents,
Those guests which come in torrents,
  And bow the high trees here?
The hurricanes that bore him;
The blasts he sends before him
  To tell that he is near.

What is that down-rushing,
That pouring, flooding, gushing,
  Which whelms and blinds me so?
With mad and mighty motions
He topples skyey oceans,
  All things to overthrow.

* * * * *

What is that bright glory,
That splendour transitory,
  Which curves across the west?
His sign of storm abated.
It seemed that he but hated;
  And he hath richly blessed.

NATURE'S DAUGHTER

GAZING away,
As the idler may,
To the east and the far-off gates of day,
A girl I found.
Her voice's sound
Showed me her place, which the shrubs hedged round.

Clear was her look,
Like an open book,
As she turned about in her fresh green nook.
Some bloom she had got
From a daisy plot,
Which she fingered and scattered about the spot.

Simple her dress;
And each vagrant tress
Of her hair was caught back in carelessness.
Supple and free
She seemed to be,
And lithe in her form as a young willow tree.

The stain of her eye
With the blue of the sky
Was matched; and the wild rose nodding nigh,
In its scented place,
Reflected the grace
And the delicate hues of her tender face.

She was sitting alone
On a hillside stone
When I came on her suddenly all unknown;
But she did not see;
And 'twas joy for me
To pause near a soul of such ecstacy.

For she sang as the birds,
A song without words,
Beside the quietly feeding herds;
And she had the air
Of one careless of care,
To whom the whole world shows sweet and fair.

She looked in the vale,
Where the mists hung pale,
Half blown away by a wandering gale;
And her song sank low,
As if it would flow
And echo the sweet hush there below.

The brook's voice, near,
She hearkened to hear,
Holding one hand, for its note, to her ear;
And tried to repeat
Its bubble and beat
In liquid voicings all tremblingly sweet.

The sun burst forth,
And gloried the earth
In sunlight; then louder grew her mirth.
Gladsome and wild
Rang the voice of the child,
And I gazed through my tears at her there, and smiled.

Her soul was in tune
With the soul of June;
And she sang June's song with a varying rune.
While the light in her eyes
Seemed the light which lies
In shadowy water 'neath twilight skies.

She laughed and she sang
Till the near wood rang;
There was never a sigh, nor a sorrow's pang.
At one with the hill,
Its rocks and its rill,
She doubted of naught, and she had her will.

There came a far call;—
And she let the flowers fall
And wandered away down a path by a wall;
But below, beyond sight,
Still I heard her delight,
Like the song of a bird that must sing in its flight.

EPIGRAM

EPIGRAM

SUSPICION

CURSE not, but pity him whose fate it is
To look distrustfully upon Mankind.
A woe full great enough to bear is this,
With faith and love cast out of heart and mind.

A CHARACTER

HE seemed at first, before he spoke,
Calm, solemn, and severe;
Anon his spirit woke,—
There came the smile, the tear.
He shared there with the other folk
Many a hope and fear.

His soul was like a tender flower;
The sweetest that could be;
Not growing in a bower,
But, wondrous mystery,
Blooming in a favoring hour
On some great rugged tree!

HOPE AND MEMORY.

AN ELIZABETHAN LYRIC

WHAT songs the heart hath sung,
For once the heart was young;
But now what echoes cry
From the deeps of memory!
Hopes, that smiled at fears,
Lie drowned in depths of tears;
Desires, that naught could sate,
Are hushed at last in fate;
Love, that knew no scorn,
Lives but to sigh and mourn;
Joy, that deemed all fair,
Is yielding to despair;
While youth, tried by time's rage,
Is drooping into age.
Sweet songs the heart hath sung,
For once the heart was young;
But saddest voices cry
From the deeps of memory.

AGE TO DEATH

AH, Death, have I thee fled afraid till now,
When, full experience gained, I ask no more!
My old limbs tremble, and my hair is hoar;
And, see, the marks of Time upon my brow!
Art thou indeed, Death, terrible? Art thou
That cloud upon my youth with all before;
The worst of worsts; a dark dream that outwore
With its insistence every joy, somehow?

Come, have thy will! I yield these dimming eyes;
My feet are tired; with weight of years I bend.
The wish to be afar behind me lies;
These withered hands no more would hoard or spend.
Waiting thee, Death, I touch a strange surmise:
Mayhap in very truth thou art my Friend!

THE SEA'S SPEECH

THE wash of waves upon lone, lifeless shores,
It is the voice of one of giant scope,
Nigh hopeless of all hope;
The long, reverberate, hollow monotone
Of impotent grief, slow-following groan on groan,
From someone old in wars,
Who still with fate would cope.

Hark to the waters on deserted sands!
The stifled sob of billows rolling nigh,
Their haunting, sombre cry,—
It is the speech of one who still would stay,
Yet in his helplessness must turn away;
Who lifts his palsied hands
To let them fall and lie.

The voice of storms is mighty; and anon
Ocean has found new vigor. Vast it falls
Upon Earth's trembling walls!

And while wind-driven clouds above it lower,
Its titan waves bespeak a nameless power;
With mist and spray made wan,
Wild in its rage, it calls.

But soon that spirit sinks, that else had crushed
The enthralling, rocky steeps,
And piled the shores in heaps.
A little while, and all that might grows still;
And mark the faltering of those tones—until,
Its roar of wrath all hushed,
Subdued, the sad Sea weeps.

These are the dying sounds of struggle past,
Before time was; when worlds were new to life,
And monstrous change was rife;
When Sea and Land in weltering conflict strove;
When thundering echoes rent the Skies above;
And power on power was cast
In elemental strife.

EPIGRAM

EPIGRAM

A CHOICE

CHAINS are not other than chains, though
fashioned of gold! I cry;
Nor is liberty less than a boon, though thou
hast but a cup and a crust.
Better a bed midst the fields, and a man's heart
at dawn in the sky,
Than a luxury great as a king's, where a voice
ever utters "Thou must!"

SHAKESPEARE

POET, a face looks downward from my wall
Which men call thine: a brow clear, nobly high;
Lips full and strong; a deepest seeing eye;
With calm a crowning quality in all.
The countenance of one to whom must fall
Legacies of light, and powers of speech whereby
To give a voice to immortality;
But is it thine, thou Man imperial?

Thine, whose vast spirit mirrored all the world;
All love, all hate, all joy, all bitter woe,
Hope, fear, between the starting place and goal,
Along the devious ways that life must go,
And was not overborne and blindly whirled?
It is not thine; man could not paint that Soul!

TO A NIGHTINGALE

DERBYSHIRE, ENGLAND

THOU wondrous voice that wakest Night!
Thou plaintive Nightingale;
Transmuting sorrow to delight
In that melodious wail!

Thou pourest out upon the dark
Thy luxury of pain,
In such a sweetest cadence. Hark!
I hear thy call again!

What hast thou lost so rich and rare,
That, when thou dost repeat
That tale of heavy-hearted care,
Thy very woe seems sweet?

What blessing hast thou seen depart,
That when thy anguish wakes,
The grief upwelling from thy heart
Immortal music makes?

One boon, I know, that we may hold;
  May hold, and then may loose,
Nor be in all our sorrow cold,
  Nor all of joy refuse.

'Tis love. If love doth turn away,
  And memory remain,
The heart will follow, day by day,
  Delight in depths of pain;

Delight in thought of love's great gift;
  Of passion's ecstacies;
Of looks and smiles which once could lift
  The spirit to the skies;

Singing, amidst its tears, the song
  Of dearest things far fled,
Till fed on memory, joy grows strong,
  And sorrow seems as dead.

Again that voice! Ah, pain and joy!
  Sing, Bird! Thy song doth prove
That thine is woe which cannot cloy;
  Thou singest of lost love.

POETRY

POUR the wine of life
In the Poet's breast.
Let fair dreams be rife;
Bid him be joy's guest.
Try his soul with pain;
Give sin, and penitence.
Living, let him gain
Full experience.

Pour of hopes and fears,
And strength which lifts above.
Pour of crystal tears;
And purple juice of love.
Pour of fruitful deeds;
Of failures, bated breath,—
Of courage that still leads;—
Pour all, save only death.

Pour, and spare it not.
  Fill the chalice ever.
He through this is wrought
  Unto rich endeavor.
When his heart brims o'er
  The world shall listen long
To brave and tender lore
  In wondrous flow of song.

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